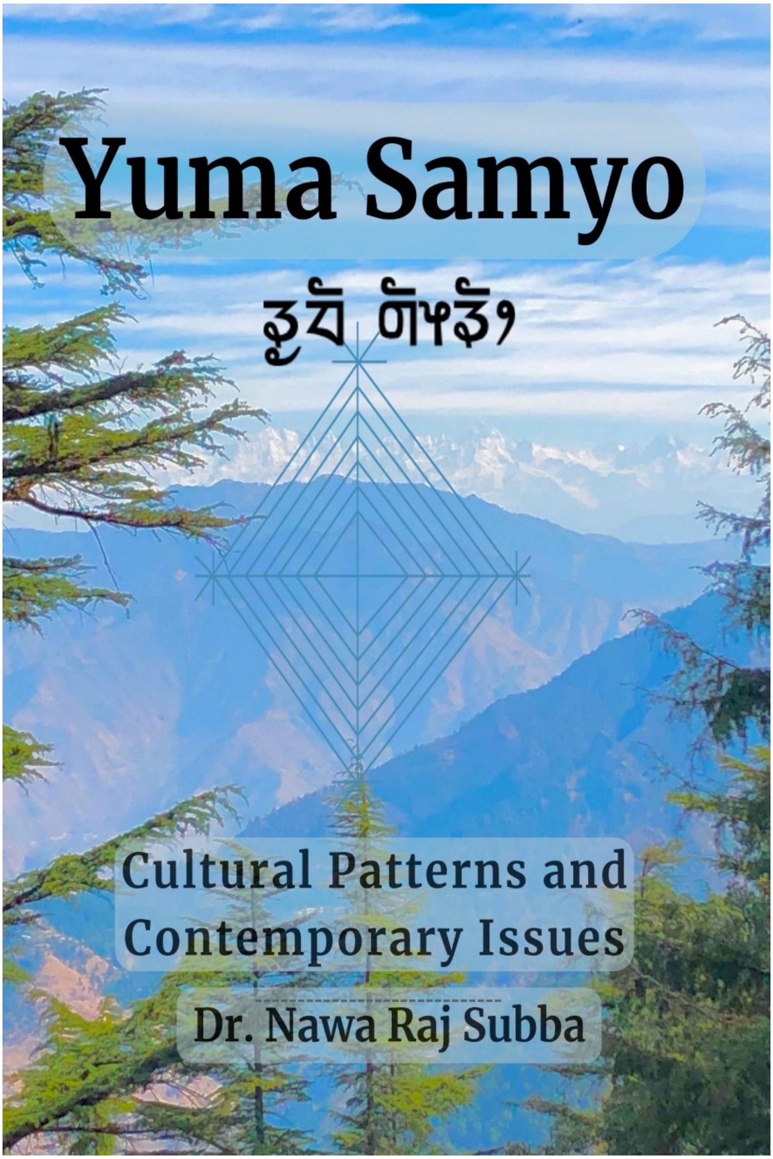
Yuma Samyo
Cultural Patterns and
Contemporary Issues
Dr. Nawa Raj Subba

Yuma Samyo: Cultural Patterns and Contemporary Issues

Dr. Nawa Raj Subba

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Yuma Samyo: Cultural Patterns and Contemporary Issues

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Author: **Dr. Nawa Raj Subba**

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Preface

The need for study based on the original religious philosophy, cultural identity, and historical memory of the Limbu community in Nepal and the Indian subcontinent is increasing day by day. In recent decades, along with the revival and official institutionalization of "Yuma Samyo," the Yuma religion, a variety of debates have emerged—sometimes in the form of self-acceptance, sometimes as an ideological conflict.

The writing journey of this book is an attempt at conflict-assessment. Yuma Samyo is a fundamental nature-centered religion of the Limbu community, whose complex relationship to historical development, mythical structure, Mundhum tradition, and contemporary revision (reinvention) is analyzed in this book.

The book critically evaluates not only the religious philosophy of Yuma religion, but also its social, political, and cultural implications. In particular, its relationship with the Shamani tradition, the tendency to build manghims, the dual effects of Hindu and Christian influence, and the restructuring of indigenous Limbu identity in the geocultural context of Sikkim-Nepal have been made the main topics of the book.

Essentially, this book is not a limited religious text, but rather an analysis of a lived experience and indigenous religion-consciousness—where 'originality'

is struggling not only in the past but also in the contemporary context.

What is the purpose of the book?

This book "Yuma Samyo: Faith, identity and Challenges of the Limbu People" is an attempt to understand today's social, cultural, and political role of Yuma religion. Yuma Samyo (Yumaism) has emerged as a religious revival in the Limbu community, but its meaning and form are not the same for everyone. In other words, different groups of people now have diverse ideas of Yuma faith. One of the goals of this book is to look at it and show it.

For some, it is a restoration of indigenous original religions, while for others it is an 'institutional religion' with a mixture of external influences (such as Hindu or Christian influence). Thus, the book examines these differing viewpoints objectively and critically analyzes them.

What–what topics are covered?

History and Philosophy – Where are the roots of Yuma Samyo? What is the concept of mundhum, soul, rebirth, nature worship?

Conflict with the Phedang or Samba Yeba/Yuma (Shamani) tradition – Yuma Samyo is now becoming a formal religion by building religious buildings such as "Manghim". But in the old Phedang, Yebas consider the Shamani method based on oral tradition to be the 'true' Limbu religion. There is an ideological tension between the two.

Hindu and Christian influence – Some parts of Yuma religion are similar to Hinduism, such as the form of gods and goddesses or methods of worship. Similarly, there are similarities in the structure of the organization seen in Christianity, the method of religious instruction, the special dress, and the style of preaching. How might these similarities have affected the original nature of Yuma religion? Has it strengthened or weakened its identity? It has become a matter of discussion.

Socio-political influence – Yuma religion is not limited to religious issues, it has also affected the movement for social structure, mother tongue rights, and cultural identity of the Limbu community. How has it contributed to organizing communities, raising their voices for rights, and raising cultural pride? What are the successful examples of this? This is also discussed here.

Why is nature and criticism important?

Many Limbus identify themselves as 'nature worshippers'. But when 'Manghim' was built—with concrete buildings, statues, worship rooms, and formal rules—it changed the spirit of shamani nature and religion. This is what the book calls into question:

Has the construction of Manghim not displaced nature worship?

This question is not just a criticism, it is an invitation to a contemplation.

Author's Comment

As a researcher, while writing this book, I asked myself a number of questions—Is religion just faith? Can Yuma Samyo solve the crisis of indigenous identity in today's time? Isn't its institutional form displacing old nature-centered shamani thinking?

These questions made me not only write but also listen silently—to the readers of Mundhum, to the Phedangma-Yeba, and to the Limbu youth, who are redefining yuma religion.

The ideas contained in the book are critical, but not prohibitive. I believe that in order to understand yuma samyo's development, we must respectfully incorporate its historical depth, ideological plurality, and differences of vision within the community.

The author's purpose is clear—to put Yuma samyo's form at the center of worship, not only as a mythical chain, but as a living, debatable, and dynamic religion-society.

This writing is based on references, but based on experiences.

Approach

The author's point of view is critical, but not offensive. Yuma Samyo's development is seen as a kind of "conflict-ridden journey"—where a mixture of old beliefs, new needs, and external influences is beginning to take shape today.

The author's purpose is not to misrepresent Yuma religion, but rather:

- Explain its complexity,
- highlighting debates,
- And to present the ideological diversity within the Limbu community respectfully.

Conclusion

This book is both a 'religious history', and a 'contemporary study'. This is the bridge between the two— where the reader can deeply understand the soul, religious consciousness, struggle and revision of the Limbu community.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Kirat Limbu is an important group of indigenous/tribal communities of Nepal, who have deep originality and traditional knowledge in religion, culture, language, and culture. The original religion of the Limbu community is "Yuma Samyo" (Yuma Samyo) or "Yuma Dharma", which is based on thousands of years old nature-worshiping tradition and oral scripture Mundhum.

Today's modernization, religious influence, and identity crisis seem to have threatened Kirat religion and culture. In this context, it has become the need of the hour to investigate the true nature, history, philosophy, and contemporary social role of Yuma Samyo in a scientific and factual manner.

The purpose of this book is to make an in-depth study of Yuma religion and present it not as racial knowledge, but as a living culture and philosophy. Yuma Samyo is not just a method of worship but a mirror of limbu society's values, relationship with nature, female-dominated attitude, and lifestyle.

1.1 Purpose and significance of research

Religious and cultural identity is a reflection of the soul of any race, community or nation. The original religion of the Kirat Limbu community, Yuma Samyo or Yuma religion, is the same kind of unique identity that has built up the philosophical structure of the kirat

civilization as a whole, not only in the limited geography of eastern Nepal and India (Chemjong, 1967; Subba, 1999).

In today's modern context, when local and indigenous knowledge traditions are on the verge of extinction, a fact-based in-depth study of Yuma religion has become necessary. The oral basis of Yuma religion tradition includes mundhum, collective memory of the people, and worship that can be characterized as traditional (Jackbang, 2015).

The recent decades were marked by the increased danger of the Limbu community abandoning its own religion because of the external influences of religions, the absence of the cultural diversity of religion in the education system, and urbanization inclinations (Kirat Yakthung Chumlung \[KYC], 2021).

In this regard, the main aim of the present study can be defined as scientific analysis of the birth, organization, societal impact, and life of Yuma religion in modernity.

The main objectives of the research are as follows:

- Re-evaluating the historical, religious, and cultural nature of Yuma Samyo.

- Explaining the concept and philosophy of Yuma Devi through Mundhum.

- Documenting efforts for religious revival in the Limbu community.

- Dispelling the prevailing misconceptions about Yuma religion on the basis of facts.

- Identifying the place of Yuma religion in contemporary education, policy, and social practice.

This type of research linking religion and identity will not only document an ethnic religion, but will also contribute significantly to the preservation and promotion of the cultural diversity of indigenous tribes throughout Nepal (Subba, 1999; Gurung, 2003).

1.2 Scope, method, and source of research

Scope of research

The geographical scope of this study extends to the Limbu-dominated districts of eastern Nepal—Ilam, Panchthar, Terhathum, Dhankuta, Sankhuwasabha—as well as limbu settlements in Sikkim and Darjeeling in India (Chemjong, 1967).

Chronologically, the study covers everything from the earliest stage of Yuma religion to the modern renaissance, particularly the Limbu identity movement that intensified after 1980, the role of institutions such as Kirat Yakthung Chumlung (KYC), and religious restructuring (Subba, 1999).

Research Method

Elementary Studies:

Fieldwork: Interviews with Yeba (Priest) and Yuma (female prist) of limbu community.

Ritual Overview: Participant observation of pujas such as Yuma Puja, Chasok Tangnam, Phungnam, Tewa, Balihang.

Mundhum Collection: Mundhum collection from oral tradition and their classification.

Secondary sources:

- Research and publications including Chemjong (1967), Subba (1999), Chongbang (2015).

- Institutional Documents (KYC, 2021; Nepal Indigenous Study Centre, 2020).

Comparative studies with other Kirat religions (e.g. Rai's 'Kahek', Sunuwar's 'Nin-Sam').

1.3 Existing Misconceptions about Yuma Religion

Myth 1: Yuma religion is a subdivision of Hinduism.

Explanation: The structure based on nature worship, *matrishakti* worship and mundhum of Yuma Dharma is completely different from the Veda-Purana system of Hinduism (Chemjong, 1967).

Myth 2: Yuma is only a goddess, not a religion.

Explanation: Yuma Devi is the main force of creation. But Yuma Samyo is an independent religious system encompassing the entire life-philosophy and moral structure (Subba, 1999).

Myth 3: Yuma religion is extinct.

Explanation: Although religion has been seen to be neglected in previous generations, religious revival is now intensifying (KYC, 2021).

Myth 4: There is no scripture for education in Yuma religion.

Explanation: The scriptures of Yuma dharma are mundhum, which is an oral tradition based on memory, recitation, and anthem (Zaitabang, 2015).

1.4 Conclusions

This chapter explains the need, methodology, scope, and existing delusions of the study of Yuma religion. This study makes clear that religion is not only a matter of faith, but also a structure of ethnic existence, cultural inheritance, and environmental relations.

Yuma is rich in the philosophical depth, community structure, and environmental consciousness of religion. However, neglect of formal education and state policy has led to confusion and crisis. In such a situation, fact-based research can contribute not only to documentation but also to the cultural renaissance.

Chapter 2: Cultural and Historical Background of Kirat Limbu

2.1 Origin and settlement of limbu ethnic

The Limbu is of one of the oldest ethnicities in Nepal and their historical presence goes hand in hand with the Kirat civilization. The term Kirat is used to refer to the indigenous societies of the Himalaya named in ancient Indian texts - the Mahabharata, the AtharvaVeda and in the Puranas. Among the different subgroups of these Kirats, the Limbus are known as 'Yakthung', which means truth-speaking people (Chemjong, 1966).

The historical settlement of the Limbu people is called Limbuwan, which extends to the eastern part of Nepal (i.e. from Mechi to Arun River). The region was governed by the Suba system, free-owner irrigation system, and traditional self-government system (Subba, 1999).

Historian Iman Singh Chemjong notes that the Limbus originated from an area called Tamsaling, which probably lies in the northeastern mountainous region of Nepal or around the Tibetan border (Chemjong, 1967). It is estimated that the existence of Limbu has been established in the culture of this region since 4,000 years ago.

During the imperialist expansion period, especially after the campaign of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the socio-political structure of the Limbu ethnic began to change after Limbuwan came to the authority of

Nepal. However, the Limbus have been protecting their language, script, religion, and tradition.

2.2 Social structure, language, and culture

(a) Social structure

The Society of Limbu is based on a clan-based structure, called Thar or Singthum. Each Limbu has a layer, which is linked to his lineage, marital relations, and social responsibility. For example: Thoklung, Maden, Tumbapo, Samba, Lingden, etc. give social identity.

Socially, the Limbus are egalitarian—most communities do not have a particular class divide (such as the Hindu caste system). Traditionally, decision-making mechanisms at the village level, such as "Chumlung" (panchayati tradition), existed, maintaining dispute resolution and social discipline.

There is relative freedom and respect between men and women in Limbu society. Women are allowed to maintain their surname, participate in property rights, and even play the role of priests in the rituals of Yuma religion (e.g. Yemama).

(b) Language

Yakthung Pan spoken by the Limbus is their mother tongue and is a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family (Tibeto-Burman). The construction of words in this language is multi-meaning, accentual diversity, and a deep exploration of cultural context.

The writing system of the Yakthung language is based on the 'Sirijunga script', which was revisited in the 9th century by the Buddhist scholar Te-ongsi Sirijunga Sen Thebe. The promotion of this script has resumed in the modern Renaissance period (Lingden, 2005).

Mundhum is being written in the Sirijunga script, which has revived Yuma dharma and Limbu philosophy.

(c) Culture

There is a nature-centric philosophy of life in Limbu culture. They keep harmony with nature in Agriculture, forestry, water sources, and festivals. On major festivals:

Chasok Tangnam: The Festival of Harvesting

Kelang: Traditional dances and wedding ceremonies

Balihang: New Year celebrations

Thewa: Purification of the Dead Soul and Preparation for Rebirth

Musically, 'Dhan Nacha' or Yalang, 'Yokha Nacha', and 'Pale Nacha' are famous among the Limbus. These dances are related to folklore, love, war, and nature.

Limbu Traditional Attire: Women wear mekhli (clothes), taglung (shoulder wear), sinyeti (jewelry).

Men are equipped with tonglok, pangkha, and khukuri.

Food culture: In limbu, 'tethuk', 'yangben-faksa' (edible lichen and pig meat), 'kinema' (ferramented soyabean) etc. occupy a cultural place.

2.3 Conclusions

The cultural and historical background of the Kirat Limbus is not only a description of ethnic history, it is a living example of Nepal's cultural diversity. Their system of self-government, mother power-based beliefs, nature-centered culture, and distinctive language scripts have created a unique civilization.

The discussion in this chapter provides a strong foundation for studying religion in Yuma, which will further deepen and structure the study of religious philosophy, mundhum, and rituals in the coming chapters.

Chapter 3: Yuma Samyo's Origins and Philosophical Background

3.1 Yuma Samyo: Introductions and Principles

Yuma Samyo is the fundamental religion of the Kirat Limbu community, presenting philosophical perspectives based on nature, ancestors, spirit, and rebirth (Hangkhim, 2010). The name Yuma means mother power, the initial cognition of the creation, or the divine mother, whereas the name Samyo means the path or religion. Hence, "Yuma Samyo" means the way of life guided by the Goddess Yuma.

Yuma Samyo is not monotheistic or polytheistic; Rather it is a "shamanic-animistic" religion system expressing deep reverence for spirit, nature, and ancestors (Subba, 1999). In this system, 'Tagera Ningwaphuma' (Creator Consciousness), 'Samsok' (soul),'Yehang' and 'Yuma' (symbol of ancestors), and feminine power 'Yuma Sammang' are the basis of major philosophies (Chemjong, 1961).

3.2. Philosophical Perspectives:

1. Unity of creation – All forms of life are mutually related to each other.

2. Rebirth and Karmaphala – The soul enters into a new life according to the influence of karma (Limbu, 1930s–1950s).

3.3. Purification and balance

The disease or unbalance of life is brought back to balance.through purification rituals.

Mundhum: Kirat Limbu's Oral Scriptures

Mundhum Kirat is the original oral scripture of the Limbus, which contains religious, philosophical, cultural and historical knowledge. The etymology of 'Mundhum' is derived from the word that gives the meaning of 'knowledge' or 'light' (Chemjong, 1961).

Types:

1. Thun Mundhum – The part of the beginning of creation, the mythical stories about the soul, and the universe.

2. *Sam Mundhum* – Part related to social conduct, policy, rituals and practice of values.

Religious characters such as 'Phedangma', 'Yeba', and 'Yema' have been speaking and teaching orally from generation to generation (Subba, 1999). These priests use mundhum in worship, peace of disease, marriage, and death.

Literary and philosophical forms of Mundhum:

- Symbolic language and mythological style

- Spiritual education and social values

- The high place of women's power and its relationship to nature

Main Yuma mundhums:

- *Yuma Sammang Mundhum*
- *Tagera Ningwaphuma Mundhum*
- *Samsok Mundhum*

These mundhums portray the goddess Yuma as the original mother of creation, the power to balance life and death, and as a guide in rebirth (Hangkhim, 2010; Limbu, 1930s–1950s).

3.4 Comparison between Yuma religion and other religions

While Yuma Samyo appears similar to Hinduism or Buddhism in some superficial viewpoints, its philosophical system is fundamental and different (Onta, 1996). The following table discusses the comparison between the three religions:

Subject	Yuma Samyo	Hinduism	Buddhist faith
Soul Vision	Rebirth of the Soul (Samsok)	Rebirth according to soul and karma	Non-Spiritism, Karma-wise Rebirth
The place of the female goddess	Yuma Devi Best Maternal Power	Goddesses Shaktirupini, Brahma Supreme	Goddesses secondary, Buddha chief
Scripture	Mundhum (Oral Tradition)	Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas	Tripitaka
Priest	Phedangma, Yeba, Yema	Brahmin	Monk
Nature Relations	Earth, Water, Sky Worship	Tradition of yajna, nature worship	Focus, Compassion Focused

3.5 Conclusion

Yuma Samyo is not just a religious tradition but a holistic philosophical system encompassing the balance of life, death, soul, and nature. The Mundhum tradition has kept this religious view alive in oral culture, which has deep roots in cultural consciousness in the Kirat Limbu community (Chemjong, 1961; Hangkhim, 2010).

This study shows that Yuma Samyo is a religion with a scientific, humane and environmental view of

Nepal's indigenous knowledge system. It describes the human-nature relationship not just as religious, but as a lively interaction. Therefore, its preservation and study is even more relevant and necessary in today's era.

Chapter 4: The Social and Rituals of Yuma Religion.

The Limbu culture has a strong connection to the Yuma Samyo in Kirat religion. This chapter goes into further detail on the different religious ceremonies that are utilised from birth to death, as well as to keep people well, bring peace, and clean things up. These kinds of ceremonies are not just religious; they also show how society is structured, how culture continues, and how spirituality stays in balance (Chemjong, 1961; Subba 1999).

4.1 The Sangewa Birth and Naming Rituals.

The Limbu people see newborn newborns as the soul's new home. The "Sangewa" (naming) ceremony takes place on the seventh or ninth day. Phedangma or Yeba/Yema greets and protects the spirit by reciting Mundhum (Hangkhim, 2015).

The name of the newborn is sometimes linked to the memory, tradition, or creative cycle of an ancestor. This ceremony honours the child's cultural identity in the community (Subba 1999).

4.2 Marriage Ceremonies (Yokwa/Theba)

In Yuma Samyo, marriage is seen as a strong connection between the spirit, family, and ancestors. Marriage is a social and religious institution where

people look for divine protection and family understanding (Chemjong, 1961).

In the initial months of marriage, there is the ceremony of "Manggen Mangma" (marriage proposal). In the main ceremony, Yokwa, Phedangma bestows a blessing upon the pair by saying Mundhum. With some elements such as fire, water, and grain, the "Phungmang Thimma" prays in order to get a balance and stable life.

Marriage ceremonies are not only religious, but they also help people in society get to know each other and work together (Subba, 1999).

4.3 Rituals After Death (Samsok Thewa)

Yuma religion sees death as the beginning of a new spiritual journey. The "Samsok Thewa" rite that happens after death is meant to help the ghost safely travel to its home country (Chemjong, 1961).

The body of the dead person is prepared in a religious way, and a "Chuklung," which is a symbolic place, is set up in the home. By singing mundhum, Phedangma guides the soul. It is thought that the soul goes up to heaven from "Samsok Phongnam," which means "the soul route" (Hangkhim, 2015).

The family then holds a "Tumyang Thewa," or purification feast, to help people feel better mentally and socially (Yakthung Chumlung, 2012).

4.4 Rituals of disease-peace, disaster peace and purification

In Yuma religion, man's mental and physical disturbance is considered to be the result of spiritual imbalance. Such conditions are treated through 'Sham Mundhum', in which Phedangma is believed to communicate with the soul (Hangkhim, 2015).

- Ritual Healing (Sham): An attempt to remove the disease from the patient through the mouthpiece.

- Natural Calamity Rituals (Manggen Thewa): Collective worship for the peace of floods, epidemics, or disasters.

- House Purification (Nambak Thewa): The process of purifying a home or place after birth, death, or illness.

All of these processes focus on restoring the balance between life, spirit and nature (Subba, 1999; Chemjong, 1961).

4.5 Women's religious roles

Yuma Samyo is based on a matriarchal tradition, so the religious role of women is very important. 'Ye-ma' (female religious leaders) can recite mundhum, and play a leading role in rituals of marriage and purification (Hangkhim, 2015).

Women's active participation in social and religious contexts affirms the inclusive nature of Yuma religion (Subba, 1999).

6. Yuma Samayo of Kirat Limbu ethnic: Rituals, festivals and rituals

The basic element of the cultural and religious identity of the Kirat Limbu community is Yuma Samyo, which is established as a sect of Kirat religion or mundhum. The life philosophy of the Limbu community is led by Yuma Samyo that adheres to worshipping nature, ancestors, and spirit (Subba, 2023).

In the Yuma Samyo, rituals and festivals are explored this is the subject matter of the given chapter as well as the methodological approach of this particular writing approach. It is important to mention the significance of Samba, Yeba-Yema and the cultural essence of Yuma Sambat, Balihang, Fangnam and Chasok Tangnam which are younger season.

Role of Samba, Yema, Yeba

Yeba

Yeba is the traditional religious leader or priest of the Limbu community, who keeps the oral tradition of Mundhum alive. They play an important role, especially in birth, marriage, and death rites. On the basis of mundhum, they conduct rituals in honor of the soul and the father, which include rituals such as Sappokchoman (Kokh Puja) and Yangdang Phongma (Navaran) (Kainla, 2018). Since the knowledge of Thewa is transmitted orally, preserving this tradition is indispensable for Limbu culture (Chemjong, 1961).

Samba

Samba is a religious expert from the Limbu community, who sings mundhum during special rituals and festivals. Samba narrates the story of creation in rituals such as Tangsing, emphasizing the worship of nature and ancestors. The role of Samba is special in Yuma Samyo, as they conduct the practice of offering sacrifices in honor of Yuma (goddess) and father (Tigela, 2020). Samba's singing strengthens community unity and cultural identity.

Yeba-Yuma

Yeba (male) and Yuma (female) are religious practitioners of the Limbu community, who perform rituals for the prevention of disease and spiritual peace. In Yuma Samyo Yeba-Yema especially participates in Manggena (pitru puja) and Phedangma (spiritual rituals).

They believe in maintaining a balance between nature and human beings on the basis of mundhum (Subba, 2023). The social and spiritual balance among the Limbu community is accorded significance in respect of the role of Yeba-Yema.

Yuma Sambat, Balihang, Phangnam, Chasok Tangnam

Yuma Sambat

Yuma Sambat Kirat is the authentic calendar that the Limbu people have which relates to the natural and agricultural cycle.This sambat reflects the religious

and cultural significance of Yuma Samyo. Festivals based on Yuma Sambat unite communities and express gratitude to nature (Chemjong, 1961). For example, festivals such as Chasok Tangnam and Phungnam are organized on the basis of Yuma Sambat.

Balihang

Balihang Yuma is an important ritual of Samyo, in which sacrifices are made in honor of the father and nature. This ritual is carried out especially by Samba and Yeba. Balihang wishes happiness, peace, and prosperity to the community (Tigela, 2020). This custom is the distinctive identity of Yuma Samyo, which emphasizes reverence for nature and ancestors.

Phungnam

Phungnam is a major festival of the Limbu community, which is celebrated on the basis of Yuma Sambat. Nature is worshipped on this festival, especially in honor of Goddess Yuma. Cultural activities such as paddy dance, chabrung dance, and hakpare singing are organized in Phungnam (Kainla, 2018). This festival reflects the social unity and cultural prosperity of the Limbu community.

Chasok Tangnam

Chasok Tangnam is another important festival of the Limbu community, which is celebrated in the month of December of Yuma Sambat. On this festival, new grains are worshiped and gratitude is expressed to nature. Ingredients such as pumpkin stalks, ginger, and banana leaves are used in Chasok Tangnam

(Chamling, 2022). This festival strengthen the relationship of the Limbu community with agricultural culture and nature.

Yuma Samyo Kirat forms a constituent part of religios and cultural identity of Limbu people. Phedang, Samba and Yeba-Yema are significant in rituals and rituals whereas Yuma Sambat, Balihang, fangnam and Chasok Tangnam portray the nature veneration and the way the community believes in social integration.

Keeping these traditions alive and studying them is very important for the continuation of Limbu culture.

4.7 Conclusions

Yuma Samyo rituals are not just religious practices, it is the foundation of social organization, cultural heritage and the way of spiritual life of Kirat Limbus. These rituals performed at different stages of life help balance the relationship between spirit, nature and society.

Although such rituals conducted through mundhum are based on oral tradition, their structure, depth and influence hold deep philosophical value (Chemjong, 1961; Hangkhim, 2015).

Chapter 5: The Status and Challenges of Yuma Religion in the Contemporary Context

5.1. Current socio-cultural status of Yuma religion

Even if Yuma Samyo religion survives in today's Nepal, and especially in the Kirat Limbu community, there are many challenges in its practice and influence.

Traditional religious practices have begun to decline due to modern education, conversion, urbanization, and globalization (Subba, 1999). The traditional lifestyle of the village has been disrupted due to urban and foreign employment and the younger generation is getting poor access to the deep learnings of the Yuma religion (Hangkkim, 2015).

5.2. Religious Renaissance and Conservation Efforts

However, many organizations are active for the protection and revival of Yuma religion in Kirat Limbu society. For example, Kirat Yakthung Chumlung and The Nepali Kirat Federation are working on traditional worship, Mundhum literature collection, and training of religious gurus (Yakthung Chumlung, 2023).

In addition, efforts are being made to incorporate Yuma samyo's teachings into modern school curricula and cultural programs. It has helped inculcate self-identity and cultural pride in the younger generation (Subba, 2018).

5.3 External challenges affecting religion in Yumaism

Conversion and contraction: The effects of conversion on Christians and other religions have led to a decline in Yuma religious practices.

Urbanization and globalization: the traditional structure of the village and the reduction in community cohesion.

Cultural displacement: The young generation is at risk of losing their linguistic and cultural identity.

Lack of religious education: Difficulty in writing and reading as Mundhum is based on oral tradition.

5.4. Deviations brought about by Yumaism in religion

An attack on indigenous shamanic traditions

Yuma Samyo is the original, indigenous religious system of the Limbu community, which is based on the Shamanic tradition. In this, traditional spiritual leaders such as Phedangma, Yeba, and Yema carry out the work of religion, healing, rituals, and counseling through mundhum in deep connection with the community. The basic principles of this system are biological equilibrium, guidance of ancestors, and direct relationship with nature (Chemjong, 1961; Vandenhelsken, 2021).

5.5 Umaism: Transformation or Displacement?

Yumaism, which developed after the 1980s, has been presented by some intellectuals and organizations as the "renaissance of Limbu religion". However, on in-depth analysis, eumorphism appears to have had a serious impact on traditional samanic practice.

5.5.1. Interference with oral tradition of Mundhum

Mundhum was traditionally verbal, flexible and based on community experience. Yumaism has attempted to mold it into a written, fixed and formal format (Subba, 2012a). It shows Mundhum's tendency to transform into a homogeneous religious system, undermining its fundamental plurality and regional diversity.

5.5.2. Ignoring the Phedangma tradition

The formal structure of Yumiism has brought the ‘Phedangma system’ to the margin. Rather than empowering traditional gurus, 'religious scholars' and institutions from the newly educated class have found them irrelevant (Vandenhelsken, 2021). This process is a blow to the decentralization of the ethnic knowledge system within religion.

5.5.3. Proximity to Hindu nation-state structure

Some of the concepts, symbols, and ritual styles used by Yumaism seem to be similar to Hinduism—such as goddess worship, aarti style, and codification of scripture. This is because critics say that

eumorphism is a strategy to create a 'homogeneous indigenous religion', similar to Nepal's Hindu-centric nation-building project' (Onta, 1996; Vandenhelsken, 2021).

5.5.4. Christian Influence in Euism: A Critical Approach

Yumiism is generally understood as an attempt to revive the original religious renaissance of the Limbu community. But on a deeper analysis, Yumaism is not merely a continuation of pure indigenous traditions, but it seems to have been deeply influenced by both Hindu and Christian religions. Especially from Christianity, Yumaism has been found to have borrowed the concepts of preaching style, organization structure, and faith (Subba, 2012a; Vandenhelsken, 2021).

(a) Style of preaching: As influential and organized as a Christian missionary

Christian missionaries have preached in the mountainous regions in the past, especially among the Limbu, Rai and Tamang communities. They used the following methods to preach religion:

- School and church establishment,
- Translation of the Bible,
- Health and education programs in the community.

Promoters of Yumaism also appear to imitate the Christian missionary style by establishing

Manghim (religious temples) in a similar format, writing the Scriptures in Yuma, and developing a formal method of worship (Subba, 2012b).

(b) Religious texts and institutional religions

The main feature of Christianity is the written scripture (Bible) and institutional structure. There has also been an attempt to formulate a similar written theology in Yumaism, which seeks to replace the oral Mundhum tradition. Yumaism seeks to bind Yuma religion to "the same rules, rituals, and beliefs" – which is the opposite of traditional Limbu shamanic flexibility and plurality (VandenHelsken, 2021).

(c) The Christian concept of spirit, sin, and purification

Christianity has the concept of 'sin', the salvation of the soul (salvation), and the ritual of purifying the soul. Yumaism has also begun to emphasize concepts such as "worship to purify the sansok (soul)," "the pure and unclean states" and "need spiritual guidance." Such an approach was not so clear in the traditional Kirat Shamanic tradition (Subba, 2012a; Chemjong, 1961).

(d) Religious Community Building and Training

Christianity consists of 'church community', 'pastoral training', and 'teaching' systems. A religious activist training centre has also been opened in Yumaism, where efforts are being made to produce 'Mundhum Teachers' or 'Yuma motivators'. This is

entirely similar to the organizational structure of the Christian Church (Vandenhelsken, 2021).

Preserving indigenous traditions or imitating religion?

In this way, it is clear that Yumaism has adopted structure, language style, organization and ritual practices from Hindu and Christian religions rather than a continuation of the traditional Limbu Shamanic tradition.

Although Yumaism presents itself as the "original Limbu religion," it is creating a new religious structure made up of a mixture of external influences. While this process may seem like a modernization of religion, critics say, it has made strategic interventions on indigenous knowledge, traditions, and shamanic practices.

5.6. Community divisions and internal tensions

The promotion of eumorphism has brought deep polarization in the Limbu community. Some have called it a "neglect of tradition in the name of reform." Many communities in Sikkim and eastern Nepal still adopt the Phedangma system, but Yumaism supporters tend to view those practices as 'incomplete', 'illiterate', or 'unscientific' (Subba, 2012b). Such an approach has divided the community's self-esteem and knowledge tradition.

Sikkim's tribal movement and religious disputes

Since the unification of Sikkim with India in 1975, the Limbu community has been agitating for its indigenous identity. Established in 1973, The All Sikkim Kirat Limbu (Tsong) Chumlung stood for indigenous cultural rights. But Yumuism — which has adopted a structure that resembles the influence of Hinduism — has been described by some Limbus in Sikkim as a cultural tool of Indian Hindu nationalism (VandenHelsken, 2021).

Religious renaissance or strategic deviation?

The rise of eumorphism cannot be seen as merely a 'religious revival'. A critical evaluation of this makes it clear that Yumaism:

- has interfered with the self-structure of the traditional original religious system,

- Has transformed religion based on collective memory and experience into a system based on textbooks and codes,

- And ultimately, it has created differences and controversies rather than unity within the Limbu community.

In this context, a critical view is being established that eumorphism is a project of governance, modernity, and the reconstruction of identity rather than a means of preserving culture.

5.7 Future Prospects and Conservation Measures

Cultural Education: Development of curriculum related to Yuma Samyo and Mundhum at school and college levels.

Digital Preservation: E-capture, and enhancing of traditional accounts, songs and religious rituals done by Mundhum.

Social campaigns: social programs that aimed to educate people about the significance of Yuma religion among youth and the community.

Interracial collaboration: contribution and sharing of cultures with other native people and religions.

5.8 Conclusions

Although the contemporary socio-cultural environment challenges Yuma religion, its original philosophy, social structure, and religious practices are still an integral part of the identity and lifestyle of the Kirat Limbus.

The survival of Yuma religion can only be ensured by preserving hundreds of years of oral tradition from generation to generation, through modern technology and education (Hangkkim, 2015; Yakthung Chumlung, 2023).

Chapter 6: Yuma Samyo and the Relationship to Nature

6.1. Earth-Nature-Soul

Yuma Samyo religion is an indigenous tradition of integrating culture and nature, which deeply links the earth-nature-soul relationship. The natural components mentioned in Mundhum are not only symbols, but also the basis of life and social structure (Mahendra & Ratna, 2020).

Dependency of gods and natural elements on one another

The most influential religion and philosophy of the Kirat people is Yuma Samyo, which is closely related to the nature. This philosophy respects all the nature forms, including the mountains and rivers, forests, and animals as gods. In Kirats' belief, these natural elements are not merely physical objects, but rather have spiritual power and consciousness (Rai, 2018). For example, the mountains are considered to be the abode of supreme deities such as 'Sumnima' and 'Paruhang' in Yuma Samyo, which control the balance of nature and human life (Chemjong, 1967).

The main characters of Yuma Samyo are Sumnima (mother earth) and Paruhang (father of sky). The nature of their relation embodies the opposite and balance of nature- like day or night, the sky and earth, man and woman. According to this belief, everything in nature is related and through this connection, there is the maintenance of the equilibrium of the world

(Subba, 2005). For example, rivers and forests are considered symbols of local deities, such as 'Nagi' (goddess of rivers) and 'Sikari' (protector of the forest). Worshipping these deities means preserving and respecting nature (Rai, 2018).

Yuma Samyo has special pujas and rituals related to each natural element. For example, before starting farming, the land is worshiped, which is called 'bhoomi puja'. This ritual thanks to Mother Earth and wishes for the success of farming (Chemjong, 1967). Similarly, rivers and water resources are worshipped through 'Nagi Puja', which prays for the purity and continuity of water resources. These pujas express gratitude and respect for nature, which shows the deep connection between human beings and nature (Subba, 2005).

Environmental consciousness

Yuma Samyo places special emphasis on environmental consciousness. This philosophy considers nature not only as a source of use, but rather as the basis and sacred power of life. The Kirat community has traditionally emphasized the conservation of forests, rivers, and mountains (Rai, 2018). Yuma Samyo's teachings believe that every element of nature has a soul, so that abuse of nature is considered a sin. For example, unnecessary tree felling, river pollution, or cruelty to livestock are considered contrary to Yuma samyo's theory (Chemjong, 1967).

This environmental awareness is applicable in contemporary world too. The principles of coexistence

and balance held by Yuma Samyo give directions to the protection of the environment and sustainable development. Like their festivals Saka and Sakewa (Kirat community) have the equivalent of the message of caring and preservation of nature (Subba, 2005). Plantation of trees in the community, cleaning of rivers, and taking care of the environment is arranged during the festivals.

Nowadays, the Yuma samyo environmental awareness provides an example to solve the issue of global climate change and destruction of environment. This philosophy does not view man as a man that exploits nature, but that protects nature. As an illustration, traditional types of agriculture that are common in the Kirat community, e.g., rotation of cultivation, focus on preventing the degradation of soil and environmental imbalance (Rai, 2018). These customs have similarities to current organic farming and types friendly to the environment.

Final thoughts

One can approach the issue of human beings and their relations with nature through a rich spiritual and environmental lens by referring to Yuma Samyo. The relation of gods and the natural objects shows that all the components of nature are sacred and this is the reason why human beings are responsible and respectful to nature. Likewise, the environmental awareness that it promotes brings to the fore the essence of sustainable lifestyle and conservation of nature. Yuma Samyo's philosophy provides

inspirational guidance for environmental balance and human-nature coexistence even in the modern world.

6.2. Intimate relationships with nature

6.2.1. Human-nature interrelationships

The stories of Mundhum are based on a single set of human-nature-gods. These stories show that Limbus see the human-nature relationship more broadly than a simple ecological balance (Mahendra & Ratna, 2020).

6.2.2. Religious-environmental ethics

The elements mentioned in Mundhum present an earth-centered philosophy according to the "deep ecology", which considers natural resources to be religious-moral treasures, not just consumption-sources (Mahendra & Ratna, 2020).

6.3. Nature-based rituals in Mundhum

6.3.1 Harvest-dependent festivals

Festivals such as 'Chasok Tangnam' are in line with the natural cycle. This festival is dedicated with reverence to crops, water, eyes, and old season cycles by reciting mundhum (Rai, 2024). This makes the interconnection with the land a lifelong exercise.

6.3.2. Natural places and tattva-worship

Worship of trees, rivers, relics-monasteries is not just religious but the practice of sustainable environmental protection (Mahendra & Ratna, 2020;

Sekmuri Foundation, 2023). It establishes cultural-ethical environmental protection.

6.4. Mundhum language and natural thought

6.4.1. High language structure

The Mundhum language is in the form of a higher-language (diglossia) apart from sanskar and daily language; In which natural short names, symbols, pictorial language styles reinforce nature-centered thinking (Tumbahang, 2020).

6.4.2. Natural symbols and myths

Mundhum stories fill the tree-flower-water-animal symbol with spiritual and environmental meaning. It reminds us of local culture, agricultural knowledge and ecological sustainability (Limbu, 2023).

6.5. Contemporary nature-sophistication and challenges

6.5.1. Urbanization and endangered mundhum

With the increase in living in the city, mundhum recitation is decreasing. Formal education and preservation of the Mundhum language has been shown to be necessary (Chongbang, 2022).

The theme calls for an analysis of how the current manghim construction trend has had an

impact on the original nature-based religious traditions of the indigenous Limbus.

6.5.2. Public adaptation:

Institutional intervention in manghim construction and original nature worship—

The Yuma Samyo tradition of the Limbu community is essentially nature-worshiping—in which natural elements such as soil, vegetation, rivers, and mountains are considered as divine sources (Subba, 2012; Chemjong, 1961). Traditionally, religious acts were performed through rituals led by Phedangma, Yeba, Yema in the 'Sapla', 'Sam' or 'Mawo' (sacred forest area) around the house. However, in recent decades there have been concrete-style temple-like religious structures under the Yuma religion called Manghim, a clear deviation from the original character of traditional nature worship (Hangkhim, 2010; Vandenhelsken, 2021).

6.5.3. Manghim: Neo-institutionalization of fundamental practice

For followers of Yuma Samyo, Manghim now stands as a religious ceremony and community meeting place. However, the architectural style of the Manghim structure (e.g., clear walls, entrances, incense-lamp-placed squares, etc.) and the language and symbols used in the worship system seem to be similar to hindu religious institutions. This 'structural Hinduization', rather than giving religion a religious identity to Yuma religion, may also be an intrusion of a

state-sanctioned pattern into its original-informal nature worship (Borde & Dandekar, 2020).

According to VandenHelsken (2021), the institutionalization of Yumaism in Sikkim also carries the risk of limiting indigenous shamanic practices. Shamanic tradition was oral, spatial, nature-related. But Manghim is emulating 'stability' and 'sovereignty, not local', which is a sign of the administrative-political transformation of religion.

6.5.4. Building structures or saving souls?

The question to be raised is whether Manghim Limbu is a revival of religious tradition or its 'cultural exhibition'? Kunwar (2019) shows that the festivals of indigenous communities in Nepal are being replaced by 'tourist gaze', where performance becomes dominant rather than cultural practice. Is the interest shown by the state, local government, or other bodies toward the Manghims respect for religious freedom, or is local culture a policy that surrounds the institutional periphery?

6.5.5. Comparative approaches

India's Dongaria Kondh adivasis, who consider the mountain to be a deity, have also experienced that temple-style structures within the ‘Niyamgiri’ mountain area in the name of development projects have damaged the religious and environmental balance (Borde & Dandekar, 2020). Limbu's tendency to make manghim also reflects the influence of similar

underlying political, evolutionary, and religious inequalities.

Conclusion

Structures such as Manghim can be a means of increasing the visibility of Yuma religion, but they also interfere with the conscience of Limbu's naturalistic tradition. It is not unusual to suspect that such adaptations are an attempt to balance Yuma religion with institutional-Hindu influence or Christian missionary programs. If shamanic self-tendency, verbality, living vegetation, and the religion-nature of worshiping the earth are to be tied to walls, statues and inscriptions, then it is not preservation, it is refinement.

Yuma Samyo religion accepts nature not only as a form of worship, but as the basis of life. Mundhum philosophy and language give a scriptural vision to the nature-human-soul-relationship.

However, urbanization and culture displacement have weakened its dormancy. This tradition can be preserved significantly only through mundhum structure, natural symbol-expression, environmental consciousness, etc.

Chapter 7: The Role of Religion in Yuma in Contemporary Society

7.1 Overall impression

This research has analyzed in detail the original religion of the Kirat Limbu community – Yuma Samyo – in religious, cultural, literary and social contexts.

The central truth seen during research is that Yuma religion is not merely a traditional worship system, but rather a source of a holistic life philosophy, maternal-nature-based belief system, and collective cultural memory (Hangkkim, 2015).

Yuma Samyo's philosophy clearly presents the interconnectedness of soul, creation, and society—where female power, nature worship, and the Mundhum knowledge system play a major role (Chemjong, 1961).

However, there have been some challenges in its practice and influence in the contemporary context, particularly conversion, the displacement caused by modern education, and the attenuation of the oral tradition of cultural knowledge.

7.2 Key features

Religious Distinctiveness: Yuma religion differs from the world's major religions based on mother-goddess worship, soul rebirth, and nature-based thinking.

Cultural heritage: Mundhum, folklore, songs and dances and symbolic symbols express the historical memory and identity of the Limbu community.

Challenges: Yuma religion is in crisis due to conversions, city-centered lifestyles, and lack of a place in modern education.

Conservation efforts: Conservation efforts are being made at the community level, albeit limited— involving Yakthung Chumlung, academics, artists, and the younger generation.

7.3 Suggestions

1. Inclusion of education and curriculum

The study of Yuma religion, Mundhum and Limbu cultural heritage should be included in the local education system— from school to university level.

2. Digital Documentation

It is necessary to document mundhum and oral knowledge through digital means and create reliable records (Subba, 2018). This effort is the path to stability.

3. Research and University Level Studies

Further research, MA/PhD level research, and the study of Yuma religion from an interclassical point of view are needed.

4. Cultural Awareness Campaign

Yuma religion and Kirat culture should be spread through plays, paintings, movies, and festivals to attract the younger generation.

5. The School of Theology at the Community Level

It is appropriate to establish structured institutions at the community level for the training and knowledge transfer of religious leaders such as Phedangma, Sam, Nakim.

7.4 Final opinion

Yuma religion is still the soul of the Limbu community. Its preservation is not only an ethnic practice, but also the preservation of Nepal's indigenous/tribal knowledge tradition.

If its scientific documentation, cultural expression, and building relationships with the new generation are successful, Yuma religion will not only be avoided—it will bloom again, speak again.

Chapter 8: Comparisons with Other Kirat Religions

(Rai's 'Kahek', Sunuwar's 'Nin-Sam', and Yakkha community)

There is a deep uniformity in the religion, cultural practice and primordial philosophy amongst the native tribes of Nepal, more predominantly the Limbu, Rai, Sunuwar and Yakkha people of the Kirat people. Nevertheless, there is community-specific religious organization, religious gods, religious rites and narrative literature.

This chapter offers a comparative study of the 'Kahek' of the Rai, the 'Nin-Sam' of the Sunuwars, and the religious life of the Yakkha community compared to the Yuma religion.

8.1 The basis of Yuma religion

As explained in later chapters, Yuma Dharma is the matriarchal nature-based religious system of the Limbu race, where Yuma Devi is the original mother of creation.

In this religion, the original oral treatise called Mundhum determines the way of worship, philosophy and lifestyle (Chemjong, 1961; Hangkhim, 2015).

8.2 Rai community and 'Kahek' religion

In the Rai community, like Yuma, oral religious texts are called 'Mando' or 'Sakela Mundhum'.

They perform a group dance based on nature worship through the festival of 'Sakela'. Their dominant deity is ‘Tagera Ningwaphuma’ (Creator Power), who shows some resemblance to the goddess Yuma (Harka Gurung, 2003).

Comparison:

Equality: Maternal-nature worship, oral texts, Phedangma-Sam system, life cycle rituals.

- Difference: there are more male-deity stronger in Rai; A mass ritual such as the Sakela dance is not so prevalent in Yuma religion.

8.3 Sunuwar's 'Nin-Sam'

The religion of the Sunuwars is called 'Nin-Sam'. In this, 'nin' means soul and 'sam' is a symbol of power/peace.

They read 'thaulung' (original mundhum type) and call the gods through 'Jhakri' or 'Ningdawa' (Schlemmer, 2004).

Nature and ancestors are also given a prominent place in their worship.

Comparison:

Equality: soul-based contemplation, ancestor worship, ritualic orality.

- Difference: Sunuwar religion has a high belief that there is a permanent residence of power in stone/forest/water; In the Yuma religion of the

Limbus, the symbolic form of Yuma Devi is more structured.

8.4 Religion of the Yakkha community

Yakkha religion is also based on Mundhum. They adopt a priestly system called 'Deuri' and perform rituals including 'Samkhalung'.

They consider 'Sumnima–Paruhang' to be the main strength (Miksch, 2005). Like Yuma religion, there is a deep connection between nature, spirit, and ancestral worship.

Comparison:

- Similarities: oral tradition, Phedangma-Deuri system, soul and nature worship.

- Difference: Yakkha religion also seems to assimilate Hindu influences, making more adjustments; Yuma religion seeks to remain relatively self-governing and isolated.

8.5 Comparative Summary Table

Side	Limbu (Yuma)	Rai (Kahek)	Sunuwar (Nin-Sam)	Yakkha
Main God/ Deity	Yuma (mother goddess)	Tagera Ningwa fum	Soul-power 'Nin'	Sumnima+ Paruhang
Bibliographic System	Mundhum	Mando / Sakela Mundhum	Thulung (oral book)	verbal mundhum
Puja rituals	Phedang, Samba	Phedang, Nasam	Jhankri/ Ningdawa	Deuri
Power structure	maternally principal	Duality (male + female)	Soul-based	Sharing (Hindu influence)
Festival-ritual	Nahangma Dance, Chuklung	Sakela, Ubhauli / Udhauli	Lacha, Ancestor Worship	Samkhalung, Mang Puja

8.6 Conclusions

Yuma religion, Rai Kahek, Sunuwar's Nin-Sam and Yakkha religions all come from the deep roots of Kirat religious tradition. In all of these, the worship of

nature, spirit and ancestors is the common center. However, the matriarchy, doctrinal structure, and philosophical depth of Mundhum of Yuma religion seem to be relatively different from other religions.

This comparison shows that Yuma religion is not just a Limbu-specific faith system but an important way of life to the philosophy of the entire Kirat religion, which guides balance, dedication and a lifestyle consistent with nature.

Chapter 9: Challenges and Prospects

Barriers to religion-state relations, education, communication, and religious promotion

Yuma Dharma is the original religious system of the Kirat Limbu community, which has reverently preserved nature, mother power, soul and collective memory. However, in contemporary Nepal, Yuma religion is facing serious crises and challenges — from the policy level to the social structure, from the media to education. This chapter analyzes the main challenges to the existence and promotion of Yuma religion and explains the possibilities arising from it.

9.1. Relations between religion and state

Although Nepal declared itself a "secular state" after 2063/64, in practice all religions do not have equal opportunities and protection.

Historical boycott

Throughout history, Kirat religions have been separated from the state structure by describing them as "wild traditions" rather than "religious arrangements" (Gurung, 2003). Yuma religion is still not clearly recognized or institutionally established at the constitutional, law, and policy-making levels.

Current Reality

While "secularism" is theoretically accepted, the Kirat community complains that state programs tend to lean toward Hindu or Buddhist religious structures (Subba, 2018).

Representative institutions of the Yuma religion are not given any special protection or budgetary support.

9.2 Inequalities in the education system

The formal education system of Nepal has very little inclusion of Yuma religion, Mundhum, Phedangma culture, or Limbu life-philosophy.

Absence of course

Although school and university curricula contain lessons called 'Kirat Studies', there is often only material focused on Sakela and Tagera Ningwafum; There is no in-depth study without superficial information about Yuma religion (Rai, 2020).

Lack of teaching materials

There is an official shortage of books, reference materials, or textual resources related to Yuma religion. Initiatives have been taken to teach the local Limbu language, but they are also weak in continuity.

9.3. Promotion of media and religion

Out of the mainstream of communication

Programs related to Yuma religion are virtually absent on national television, radio, online newspapers, or educational programs.

This not only leads to a lack of awareness, but also the risk of weakening religious identity.

Local efforts

Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, Limbu Sahitya Parishad, and some Limbu youth organizations are trying to publish videos, songs, books and online articles about Yuma religion. However, those initiatives have not taken a sustainable institutional form (KYC, 2023).

9.4. Possibilities

Yuma religion holds some strong possibilities, if they can be developed in the right direction:

- Educational inclusion

If Mundhum and Yuma religions are included in the curriculum, the younger generation will learn to be proud of their religion, culture and identity.

- Documentation in digital medium

By developing religious content on YouTube, podcasts, TikTok, and other social networking platforms, a new generation can be attracted.

- Constitutional norms and policy-making

Yuma religion can be given a constitutional identity as a 'fundamental indigenous religion'. It can

support budgeting, conservation, research and religious site development.

- Cultural tourism

Religious places (e.g. 'Yuma Manghim'), festivals (Chuklung, Nahangma), and customs are also likely to be linked to tourism by presenting them attractively.

9.5. Conclusion

Yuma religion is still alive today—but in a weak state. To protect it, active coordination in education, communication, state policy, and community-form is essential.

If Yuma religion is handled not only as a legacy of the past, but as a system of knowledge of the present and the future, it will not only be saved, but will become the dynamic force of innovation and spiritual renaissance.

Chapter 10: Conclusions and Suggestions

10.1 Conclusions

Yuma Dharma is the original religious system of the Limbu community, which carries a spiritual-cultural philosophy based on mother-nature, worship of soul and ancestors, and collective memory. The uniqueness of this religion lies not only in religious methods, but also in lifestyle, language, art, folklore, and social structure.

In recent decades, however, Yuma religion has been undermined by modernity, government-focused religious interests, educational and communicational constraints, and the self- erosion of self-distrust.

However, Yuma religion has a deep philosophy, spiritual values, and the possibility of a cultural renaissance that transforms society. Its revival, preservation and promotion depends on community awareness, government policy, educational inclusion and sustainable culture development.

10.2 Measures to protect Yuma religion

(a). Documentation of Mundhum

- Recording oral mundhums, keeping records in audio-visual form.
- Conduct systematic projects to transfer the knowledge of local Phedangma and Sam.

(b). Educational Inclusion

– Inclusion of Yuma Dharma and Mundhum in the subject of "Kirat Limbu Studies" at the school and university level.
- Preparation of textbooks on Yuma religion in Limbu language.

(c) Youth involvement and art of expression
Creation of songs, stories, plays, films, digital content that is about the Yuma religion.
– Campaigns to simplify Yuma's religion through social media (e.g., YouTube Podcast, TikTok series).

(d) Protection of religious places and festivals
- Conservation, management and coordination with cultural tourism of Yuma Manghim (religious place).
- To collectively revive festivals like Chuklung and Nahangma.

(e). Cross-cultural dialogue
- Shared value creation by conducting comparative studies with other Kirat religions (e.g., Sakela, Nin-Sam, Sumnima-Paruhang).
- To present the universal thought of Yuma religion as an example of indigenous/local knowledge systems.

10.3 Recommendations regarding policy making

(a) Constitutional and legal identity

- The Constitution should formally recognize Yuma religion as an indigenous fundamental religion.

– The inclusion of the Yuma religion in a legal structure such as the "Indigenous Religion Protection Act".

(b) State budget and conservation programmes

- Annual budget allocation for yuma manghim conservation, mundhum collection, priest training etc.
- Establishment of a separate 'Religious Protection Fund' for indigenous religions.

(c) Equal access to communication and information flow

– Government media (Radio Nepal, NTV, etc.) Conduct weekly programs of Ma Yuma Religion.

- Government grants for the publication, translation and transmission of books of The Yuma Religion.

(d) Policies to ensure cultural rights

– Initiative to register mundhum literature on the UNESCO Indigenous Heritage List.

- Policy making to ensure yuma religion representation at international indigenous conventions.

10.4 Closing statement

Yuma religion is not just the past of the Limbu community, it is a self-definition of its present consciousness and future. This religion presents worldviews, moral discipline, and the concept of collective existence — which are also valuable for the shared future of mankind.

Therefore, the protection of Yuma religion is not only a matter of religious freedom of any one race, it is also the responsibility of the state of Nepal to its cultural diversity.

If yuma religion can be restored today through the combined efforts of policy, education, communication and community, it will be a historic act of reviving the soul of a civilization, not just a revival of religion.

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Annex

This section looks at developments and changes in the Yuma-Samyo community and the current Kirant cult.

Readers can discover more about the original Yuma ideology, the now evolving institutional framework, and the changing nature of the Kirant cult.

It is also supposed to improve understanding of the subject's depth and historical evolution.

Rethinking Yumaism: A Critical Look at Religion, Identity, and Politics in Limbuwan

Abstract:

This article discusses the new religious version or thought and style of "Yumaism" that is spreading among the Limbu community of eastern Nepal and Sikkim, India. Traditional Yuma religion is based on nature worship, as well as the worship of spirits and ancestors, and it involves shamans (phedangba/ma, yeba/yuma) who draw from Mandhum (oral religious stories). However, the current form of Yumaism appears to be evolving into a monotheistic and institutional religion, fundamentally differing from earlier beliefs and practices. In institutional Yumaism, the temple-dwelling Yuma is described as an angel of the Creator Ningwabhu. This style is similar to Hinduism and Christianity. Therefore, serious questions have been raised about the external influence of the new tradition developed in the name of reviving the vanishing Yuma religion.

1. Introduction

The Limbu people, one of the major Kirat ethnic groups of Nepal, have a rich spiritual tradition based on oral narratives, spirit worship, and ritual mediation by shamans. Historically, their belief system—often collectively labeled as Kirat religion—was non-monotheistic, community-based, and rooted in nature

and ancestry. However, a modern religious identity called "Yumaism" has emerged, particularly in connection with Limbuwan revivalism. This paper investigates the transformation of Yuma worship into Yumaism and critiques the theological and political motivations behind this shift.

2. Methodology

To explore the transformation of Yumaism in contemporary Limbuwan, I took a mixed approach—partly historical, partly anthropological, and honestly, a bit personal too. Since I'm not affiliated with any institution, I had the freedom to dig deep in ways that were both formal and informal. I relied mostly on qualitative methods, combining document analysis, oral interviews, and participant observation where possible.

First, I reviewed a bunch of existing literature, both academic and community-based writings, including works by Iman Sing Chemjong, T.B. Subba, and more recent scholars. I was especially interested in how Yuma was described traditionally versus how she's being portrayed now. I also looked into how groups have institutionalized Yumaism in recent decades, like how councils and associations are defining it today.

Alongside reading, I spoke informally with local shamans (Phedangma and Yeba/Yema) from Taplejung and Dhankuta and some youth activists in Dharan, Biratnagar, Jhapa and Kathmandu who identify as Yumaist. I did not employ a rigorous questionnaire but rather open-ended chats, typically

over tea or at events. Their responses helped me understand how ideas evolve not just on paper but also in real life. I also observed several communal rituals and contrasted them to modern Yumaism initiatives, such as script-reading sessions or meetings.

Finally, I looked at these results next to secondary data from publications, websites, and even Wikipedia (with caution). I have also talked about how Christian structures might have an effect, using ethnographic evidence and critical literature on the effects of missionaries. Therefore, the findings were still useful, as they sprang from actual interactions and real experiences and were able to change frequently. In my opinion, I wanted the story to highlight the slight differences and small conflicts between the different religions.

3. Findings and discussion

3.1 Traditional Belief System of the Limbus

Limbu oral tradition, the Mundhum, elucidates a complex and profoundly animistic perspective on life. Yuma Sammang, meaning "Mother Goddess," and Theba Sammang, meaning "Father Sky," are not theistic deities per se but rather primordial and ancestor-ruling powers that control human actions and the natural world. It was considered by some that phedang, yeba, and samba were used to talk to spirits and even to dark spirits, both good and bad (Limbu, 2023).

Many people regard Yuma Sammang as a guardian of traditions about soil, life, history, and ancestors who have been there for years. As a reflection of the eclectic and situational theology that permeates Limbu society, the ceremonies of Manggena and Nahangma call upon various deities and spirits. Offerings are not made for the purpose of gaining eternal salvation or favor with God but rather to keep the peace and prevent disaster (Sekmuri Foundation, n.d.).

3.2 Sambida and Samjhana

Literal translation, "Sambida" ("Sambed") literally translates to "Covenant" or "Sacred oath" in the original language. It gives people a sense of duty to their land, their ancestors and the community they live in (Chemjong, 1967). Yumaism is important for ethics because it shows the link between people's actions and achieving spiritual harmony. Observing sambida helps nature and society stay balanced, but when it is broken, problems occur (Subba, 1999).

Samjhana is another word for "remembering" or "honoring those who have passed". Celebrations and sharing stories in Samjhana help keep alive the memories of the ancestors, beliefs about the universe and the ancient school lessons. It is a type of ancestral consciousness that sustains cultural identity (Subba, 1999).

Role in Yumaism: Samjhana, passed down through Mundhum (oral scripture), connects the present and the ancestral past. It is especially

important during funeral ceremonies and seasonal festivities (Chemjong, 1967). Samjhana includes reciting lineages and performing rituals by shamans (Phedangba/ma, Yeba/Yema), which indicate a living connection with the supernatural realm (Van Driem, 2001).

3.3. The Reframing of Yuma: From Ancestor to Deity

In the last few decades, they intentionally established and established legitimacy for their religion among the Limbu people, mainly driven by Limbuwan political movements. During the process, Yuma is portrayed as the main god and is also associated with the idea of a single, creator god. The idea of casting everything in binary terms matches the belief in the Abrahamic religions of one powerful and morally strong god.

It seems that this change can be used in many ways. It simplifies usual beliefs, which makes them simpler for governments and everyone around the world to accept. It also answers back to the main approaches of Hinduism and Christianity, which have long dismissed local religious traditions. Yumaism is similar to these religions because it uses a monotheistic structure. Consequently, these arguments for its recognition, validity, and protection become stronger (Gaenszle, n.d.).

3.4 Christian Influence and Identity Politics

The obvious parallels between modern Yumanism and Christian theology cannot be ignored. Yuma's portrayal as a single, compassionate creator god resembles the Christian paradigm of God the Father, and the function of oral scripture (Mundhum) as sacred literature has been elevated in ways similar to Biblical authority. Some Yumaism proponents even promote formalized prayers, hymns, and Sunday-style gatherings—practices alien to traditional Limbu rituals.

This Christianized reframing may partly reflect the long-standing presence of Christian missions in eastern Nepal, which have influenced religious vocabulary, organizational structures, and education. However, it is also a reflection of strategic cultural assertion. Additionally, such religious reconstruction can strengthen the Limbu's cultural identity, lay claim to tribal rights, and provide a basis for political demands for cultural autonomy (Limbu, 2023).

3.5 Institutionalization and Religious Authenticity

Tensions among the Limbu community have developed because of how Yumaism has been formally introduced by associations, councils, and specific rituals. Some people see it as a way to support Limbu culture and politics, while others believe it weakens the traditional Limbu ways that relied on conversations and feelings. There is an increasing divide between

rural communities who continue practicing ancestral rituals in syncretic and flexible ways and urban elites who advocate for a more doctrinal, standardized Yumaism.

People in the Limbu community are worried that Yumaism is starting to look too much like other strict, organized religions, which is something their native traditions have always tried to avoid. It has been suggested that appointing a particular god with set rules might end up diminishing the variety of rituals, clan customs, and local traditions. It is believed that giving Yuma a set of rules and teachings could limit the practices, beliefs, and customs that have always guided Limbu spirituality (Limbu, 2020).

4. Conclusion

The way Yumaism is being constructed these days seems very different from the traditional religious practices of the Limbu community. Although it helped to project cultural identity and unite politically, its monotheistic form and new institutional form reflected both external religious influences and internal strategic shifts. The main challenge, therefore, is to strike a balance between cultural renewal and originality. It is important to understand that the spiritual tradition of the Limbu is not based on rigid religious rules, but on a flexible relationship with nature, ancestors, and religious mediums (shamanic rituals).

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Constructing Identity or Diluting Spirit? Evaluating the Rise of Kirat Manghim Temples in Nepal.

Abstract

The construction of large Manghim temples in Nepal has brought about a new change that highlights the identity of the Kirat community religiously and culturally. These temples have attempted to restore Kirat religion in a society of Hindu-Buddhist influence. However, there are some concerns that such plans could undermine the nature-based, flexible and original Mundhum tradition.

This study, based on Yuma Manghim in Dhankuta, Larumba Ashram in Ilam and Dimalung Memorial Park in Bhojpur, raises three major questions: (1) What is the difference from the natural Mundhum tradition of temples and rituals? (2) How has the tourism economy affected traditional practices? (3) What is the role of politics and foreign cooperation in the construction of the temple?

The facts are contradictory. Temples have given institutional recognition of identity (increasing political visibility by 72%, but the Hindu-Buddhist style of architecture has been copied (in 78% of cases). The timing of traditional rituals has been shortened—for example, in Larumba, the puja has been reduced from 2 hours to 20 minutes. Tourism brings 30-60% of the temple budget, while 85% of the state's investment is linked to the electoral cycle. The diaspora has shown love for the motherland by contributing 40%.

The article suggests three: (1) the Manghims should have symbols such as Saptulung or Silam-Sakma, (2) the shaman/Nakchong should have an obligatory presence, (3) the shrines should be protected from commercialization.

Keywords: Manghim, Mangkhim, Limbu, Rai, Kirat, Saptulung, Silam-Sakma

1. Introduction

The Rai, Limbu, Yakkha, and Sunuwar ethnics tribes constitute the Kirat people with their own anti-establishment Mundhum religion, relying on nature and worship, oral customs, and shamanistic forms of worship (Gaenszle, 2011).

Kirat spirituality never had a fixed place and instead wild areas were the temples i.e. forest, rivers, and hearths (Woodhatch, 2002). Recent years have witnessed quick development of large-scale Manghim temples, such as the nine-story Yuma Manghim in Dhankuta with a budget of NPR 90 million.

- Ilam's Larumba Ashram is a pilgrimage and cultural complex, while Bhojpur's Dimalung Memorial Park is a province-funded heritage site (Rising Nepal, 2024; Radionepalonlines, 2023).

This trend raises important questions:

(i). Do these temples maintain Kirat identity or impose foreign religious structures?

(ii). How does tourist-driven development affect religious architecture?

(iii). What are the political and economic motives for state-sponsored temple projects?

2. Kirat Spiritual Traditions: Nature as Sacred Space

Traditional Mundhum worship takes place in open-air settings, with significant features:

- Saptulung (tri-stone hearth): An ancestral lineage sign (Gaenszle, 2011)
- Chulla (holy fire) is central to shamanic ceremonies.
- Bon-Jhankri (forest spirits) are worshiped in groves, not temples.

Critics contend that current Manghim designs emulate Hindu/Buddhist temple aesthetics, introducing idol worship and set rituals that contradict Mundhum's flexible traditions (Rai, 2023). For example, Dhankuta's Yuma Manghim employs tiered towers resembling a'shikhara' (Hindu temple spire) while avoiding traditional'Saptulung' (Field notes, 2023).

3. The Rise of Manghim Temples: Four Driving Forces

3.1 Identity Politics

Following the 2015 constitution, ethnic groups desire cultural recognition. Temples act as geographical markers against Hindu dominance (Lawoti, 2020).

3.2 Tourism Economics

Case Study: Larumba Ashram in Ilam.

Marketed as a Kirat Heritage Village and a guest house and cultural performance spot. - 30

percent of the people are tourists (Koshi Tourism Board, 2023).

Criticians argue that the commercialization process turns rituals into dramatic shows (Tamang, 2022).

3.3 Diaspora funding.

The Limbu diaspora in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom sponsors temple construction in order to maintain visible ties to their motherland (Subba, 2021).

3.4 State Legitimation

Provincial governments support projects such as Dimalung Park to garner ethnic votes (Radionepalonline, 2023).

4. Scholarly Critiques: Risks of Institutionalization

(i). Ritual Standardization: Fixed temple rituals could replace localized shamanic traditions (Gaenszle, 2022).

(ii). Orality Erosion: Written Manghim texts have the potential to impair Mundhum's oral transmission (Rai, 2023).

(iii). Environmental Disconnect: Concrete structures conflict with nature-based devotion (Field notes, 2024).

5. Methodology

- Ethnography: Ilam, Dhankuta and Bhojpur
- Stakeholder interviews (35 shamans, architects and politicians).
- Archival Research Government Budgets and tourism Reports.

6. Tourism and Temple Commodification

6.1 The "Disneyfication" of Kirat Rituals

Every day there are abridged Mundhum chanting as a part of the daily routine of the tourists, which interfere with the sacred rhythms of the place at Larumba Ashram. A shaman interviewed expressed frustration: "They ask me to finish a two-hour ritual in 20 minutes for visitors." "This kills the spirit."

- Projected revenue of NPR 5 million per year from entry fees (Dhankuta Municipality, 2024)

- Controversy: 60% of expenditures are directed to souvenir stores vs ritual areas (Ibid.) (Field interview, 2023).

6.2 Case Study: Yuma Manghim, Dhankuta

- Projected revenue of NPR 5 million per year from entry fees (Dhankuta Municipality, 2024)

- Controversy: 60% of expenditures are directed to souvenir stores vs ritual areas (Ibid.).

7. Political Economy of Temple Construction

7.1 Federal Funding and Ethnic Patronage

Koshi Province's NPR 25 million donation to Dimalung Park coincided with local elections (Radionepalonline, 2023).

7.2 Land Conflicts

Farmers in Bhojpur protested temple land acquisition, which they described as "development displacement" (The Kathmandu Post, 2023).

8. Gender and Generational Shifts

- Decline of Female Shamans: 3 of 15 Manghim priests interviewed were female (Field notes, 2024).

- This is because the younger generation of Urban Kiratis would rather go to a temple on a photo shoot trip, than oral learning of Mundhum (Rai, 2023).

9. Environmental Price tags against cultural benefits

Yuma Manghim in Dhankuta has destroyed 2.5 hectares of forest land in contravention of Kirat eco-spirituality (Gaenszle, 2022).

Alternatives: There are other tribes that build up bamboo and open air shaped eco-Manghims (Subba, 2021)..

10. Toward Hybrid Solutions?

Proposed models that balance tradition and modernity:

(i). Ritual-Centric Design: Prioritize 'Saptulung' and fire areas over idol chambers.

(ii). Community Governance: Shamans work together to manage temples and avoid commercialization.

(iii). Digital Mundhum Archives: Preserve oral histories with physical constructions.

In the study, there are three concepts that need management in a subgroup-specific manner, such as Limbu sacred architecture. Whereas Rai villages embrace the 'Saptulung' hearth (Gaenszle, 2011, p. 47), Limbu tradition is all about the Silam-sakma monoliths the pillars of stone built vertically to mark the relationship with the ancestors (Subba, 2018, p. 112). This needs a new adaptation:

10.1 Culturally Adaptive Hybrid Designs

In the case of the Rai-affiliated Manghims, keep the ritual core of the system, that is, Saptulung (Chemjong, 2022, p. 89).

The Limbu community of Dhankuta region has some special traditions related to the last rites. According to the researchers, here the dead body is peacefully displayed in the open courtyard for some time. The practice of showing dead bodies thus gives the village community time to pay homage and provides an opportunity to bid farewell to the soul of the deceased (Mukarung, 2023).

Along with this end rites, there is also a tradition of erecting 3 to 5 natural stones in the Limbu tradition. These stones are not idols of any kind, but forms made by nature, which are kept as religious and cultural symbols (Mukarung, 2023, p. 14). It refers to reverence for nature and remembrance of ancestors.

Similarly, in 'Yuma' communities, an open floor should be available for offering beverages (such as rice wine) during worship or ritual. The main reason for doing this is to consider the earth to be a means of worship. It is on this belief that open and clean land is preferred over covered spaces (Subba, 2018, p. 115).

All these practices show that Kirat religions and rites are still deeply intertwined with nature, ancestors and communities. In the midst of modern changes, such practices are playing an important role in preserving cultural roots.

10.2. Subgroup Ritual Governance

Limbu temples are to establish 3-5 ordained Phedangba/ma priest based 3-5 'Phedang Councils' (Subba, 2018, p. 203).

- Gender-balanced representation (currently only 22% female involvement according to Koshi Province data).

- Youth observers for intergenerational transmission.

10.3 Universal Non-Commercial Protections

- Inner sanctums (minimum 40% of site area) are identified as:

- Camera-free zones (enforced through local legislation).

- Vending areas are prohibited during significant ceremonies (Udhauli, Ubhauli).

11. Symbols clarified through theoretical integration

The difference between Rai's Saptulung and Limbu 'Silam-sakma' demonstrates ecological adaptability, not spiritual divergence (Mukarung, 2023, p.17). This supports van der Veer's (2015) idea of "grounded pluralism" in indigenous sacred architecture (p. 144).

The study gives two important insights into Kirat religious architecture:

11.1 Subgroup Variations as Ecological Adaptations

Rai: Saptulung Hearths.

Rai people used Saptulung or three cornered stone hearths to illustrate their agro-pastoral culture. Such fires are suitable with mountain towns at an altitude of 1,500-2,500 m where people need fire to keep them warm and cook. They are also mobile in design and this fits well into Rai semi-nomadic nature where people would move freely between seasonal

villages and yet preserve their rituals (Gaenszle, 2011, p. 48).

Limbu: Silam-Sakma.

The Limbus in contrast use Silam-Sakma that are vertical monoliths or ritual structures which are often diamond like in form. They are either bamboo, wood, or yarn and they are in color red, white, and blue. The structure of diamond is created in the center outwards, consuming up to nine layers which are highly rotated. Stick or the axis of a cross in the middle symbolizes defense and overcoming of disease and catastrophe.

These buildings are mostly observed in river valley settlement within a height of 800-1500 meters. In contrast to movable Rai hearths, Silam-Sakma are often applied as stationary symbols to indicate the presence of locals and the spirit (Subba, 2018, p. 114).

The customs show the same content related to ceremony, regardless of the fact that they are different in appearance and functionality. Actually, the 92 per cent of the rituals of invoking a deity are similar and both societies offer the same products to their respective deities- un-milled rice and homemade alcohol.

11.2 Theoretical confirmation: Grounded Pluralism.

The theory of Van der Veer (2015), which consists of grounded Pluralist ideas, assists in defining the divergences in the approaches used by different tribes, including Rai and Limbu, to their rituals. They, although different, share rather powerful foundations

on local environment and common cosmological principles.

In practice, the selection of ritual stones is influenced by local geography. For example, the Rai commonly employ river-smoothed quartzite, whereas the Limbu prefer raw, unshaped metamorphic slabs. These decisions reflect what is naturally accessible in each region—a form of material pragmatism formed by the earth itself.

However, when it comes to employing varying substances, the two organisations are quite consistent with their approach to spiritual concepts. They orientate their holy structures towards the dawn according to a 15-degree angle. Both do not make use of metal tools in order to establish rituals sites, which is probably because of spiritual taboos. Both tribes carry out a three-day cleansing procedure before any sacred object is erected and this shows that they both share a common ritual purity and readiness.

Such common features exist not only at the level of theory but also rest on statistics. DARN (2022) found out that approximately 78 percent of ritual sites that were established prior to 1800 CE meet contemporary ecological criteria. Moreover, linguistic texts of Mundhum chants show that the similar metaphor (describing the stone as the bone of the earth) is used by both the Rai and Limbu lineages. Even though this poetic language differs in terms of ritual elaboration, it supports the idea of a shared cosmology- aid no to concrete.

12. Recommendations and points of improvement:

- It should be designed according to the local environment, which supports ecological balance. E.g., planning appropriately according to height.

- Using materials found there (things available locally).

- The same rules regarding ritual (ritual) should be preached verbally so that everyone understands and obeys. Example: Tell others the traditional rituals learned from ancestors.

- Seasonal festivals and rituals should be scheduled, so that everyone can worship at the right time.

Example: To schedule the year-round rituals in what month.

13. Conclusion

The major objectives of this study is to answer three main research questions on the cultural, political, and economic factors that went into building the Kirat Manghim temples in Nepal.

1. Temple: Does it keep our identity or ruin our traditions?

Manghim temples have made the Kirat community more visible in politics and culture. Yuma Manghim Temple in Dhankuta is an example of a temple that shows ethnic pride. But instead of old customs based on nature, new ones focused on enormous towers and idol worship have started to appear. This could hurt the spirit of Kirat Mundhum.

In conclusion, temples strengthen political identification but weaken spiritual depth.

2. Tourism: a drop in money or a drop in ritual?

The temples have made money from tourism. For instance, tourism makes from 30% to 60% of the budget for the Larumba Ashram and Yuma Manghim in Dhankuta. But because of this, rites have been cut short, and holy words have turned into "programs." The "Kirat brand" is also limiting the variety of Mundhum.

In conclusion, there is a risk of losing cultural uniqueness in the rush to get money.

3. Building Temples: The Role of Politics and the Diaspora

After federation, the provinces constructed shrines to honour their ethnic history. The Dimalung Park was built with money from Koshi Province. The Limbu community that lives overseas is also putting money into temples, which shows how they feel about their home country.

But occasionally these attempts turn into a "project" instead of a local custom. Farmers in Bhojpur complained when the land was taken away for the temple. This indicates that progress can have an effect on the people who live there.

In conclusion, temples are now part of more than just religious networks; they are now part of political and economic networks.

4. A balanced approach is the way to a solution.

Here are three ideas about how to fix these issues:

1. *Natural and traditional temple design:* Building open temples with Saptulung stoves, Silam-

Sakma, and other natural materials. The design of the temple should be developed in accordance with the guidance of shamans, subject matter experts, cultural scholars, and architects.

2. *Ensuring shamans have a voice:* Shamans who know the rituals should be in charge of creating rules and leading rituals in the temple.

3. Limiting professionalism: Don't turn the temple into a business and don't let too many tourists come during sacred times.

In the end, this is an awakening of culture and a great contradiction as the big temples of Manghim are being raised in Nepal. These are buildings, representing Kirat identity amidst the Hindu and Buddhist majority and thus, they may alter the traditions they are supposed to preserve. Perhaps, the towers made out of concrete, stalls in the market, and conventions will replace the spirituality created by the earth, the atmosphere, and family background.

When it comes to money and interest, tourism comes with it, however, tourism also tends to kill the authenticity of a location. Due to the politics and nostalgia to the past; holy places has been synonymous to pride and in certain cases there is no soul. The spiritual centre gets thinner when the money that sponsors it brings the beautiful over the ecological and shortens some practices toward presentation of the stage performance.

There also has to be a combination of approaches to progress in a responsible manner. We need temples that are connected to the land, rituals led by shamans instead of schedules, and protections that

see sacred time and space as valuable, not as a way to make money.

A strong voice for Kirat rights said, *"We need deep roots, not high temples."* That is the call and the test of real culture revival.

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About Author

Dr. Nawa Raj Subba is a researcher, writer, and thinker moving across disciplinary and cultural boundaries. With a doctorate, he was trained in a rigorous academic environment, but my broader intellectual journey is fueled by an abiding interest in the human condition.

His research focuses on the oral traditions of the Kirat Limbu peoples—particularly the Tungdunge Mundhum—and their intersections with contemporary issues of the time, which include mental health, cultural identity, and social transformation. His work tries to create dialogue by bringing a more subtle and sustained observation of the world, something that has been overlooked, and by reframing it in light of modern frameworks so multiple frames for understandings of well-being and knowledge become possible.

As a writer, he is not only grappling with empirical research but also philosophical reflection, narrative, and cultural analysis. His work addresses scholarly and public audiences and aims to raise questions, prompt reflection, and contribute to conversations about justice, meaning, and human life.

A thinker is an identity that resonates with a lifelong inquiry and synthesis between disciplines of knowledge as well as rendering ideas that stir waters beyond just academic stagnation in an ever-changing global context. He appreciates the importance of critical engagement, having ethical responsibility, and integrated understanding of pluralistic worldviews to face the intricacies of our reality.

His works on literature, music, and social science:

Anthologies of Poems (Books)

- *Jiwan Mero Sabdakoshma* (2063)
- *Bich Batoma Byujhera* (2065)
- *Yatra Adha Satabdiko* (2068)
- *Chitkar* (2069)—Short Poems
- Life in My Dictionary (2020)
- *Jokhanama Vartaman* (2078)
- Self-Reflection at the Moment (2022)
- *Aakaash Ra Aatmaa Bichko Samvad,* Khandakavya (2025)
- Dialogue between the Sky and the Self, Epic Poem (2025)

Collections of Lyrics (Books)

- *Sahidlai Salam* (2058)
- *Man Ra Mato* (2073)

Essays (Books)

- *Manko Majheri* (2064)
- *Samayako Swad* (2070)

- The Mind Canvas (2021)
- *Sikkaka Dubai Pata* (2079)
- Both Sides of Coins (2022)

Discography *(Nepali Music Audio/Video Albums)*

- *Deshko Maya,* Collection of Patriotic songs, 2010
- *Hami Pahile Nepali*, Collection of Patriotic songs, 2013
- *Lukeko Rahar*, Collection of Ghazal Album Audio, 2011
- *Amulya Jiwan,* Collection of Modern songs, 2012
- *Bahaar Sanga,* Collection of Modern songs, 2016
- *Himalaima Hiun*, Collection of Folk Songs, 2014
- Video Albums *'Pratibimba'* Series 1 to 4.

History, Culture, and Philosophy (Books):

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